

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

30 September 1980

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Thank you for your letter of 19 September raising concern about the possible ethical conflicts for anthropologists considering employment with CIA. We share your concern, for in no way would we wish to ask any employee to perform a task which was in conflict with his professional ethics, and welcome the opportunity to clarify the areas of concern you have raised.

In response to your request that we comment on the "potential conflicts between the requirements imposed on anthropologists by (their) ethics code and the responsibilities associated with the position: offered by the CIA, it appears that the basis of the potential conflict involves different concepts of "research" and "secret research." Anthropological research is conducted in the field and requires the establishment of a unique human relationship between the anthropologist and each of his informants. This is a privileged relationship, not unlike that between a doctor and his patients, and is properly protected by the AAA Code of Ethics.

The kind of intelligence research (or more properly, analysis) prescribed for the CIA position does not involve traditional anthropological field work. It is essentially library and files research. Its purposes are (1) to provide the executive and legislative branches of the government with impartial analyses from a social science perspective of the social, economic, and political conditions prevailing in a foreign country, and (2) estimates of the ways those conditions may change in the future. In general, such analyses provide background for more comprehensive analysis which by their proprietary nature are classified and not releasable to the public.

Anthropologists are needed because they bring a unique perspective to interdisciplinary intelligence research. Their holistic approach to the study of human

behavior enables them to perform in intergrating function that no other discipline provides. We believe strongly that in contributing to better understanding of foreign cultures, anthropologists would be making a positive contribution to more reasoned formulation of foreign policy. From our perspective, such contributions are in the National interest and consistent with the ethical guidelines of your society. We hope you concur.

[Redacted Signature]

Deputy Chief
Recruitment Division

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